IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A contents management system in which a playback device plays an encrypted content stored on a portable recording medium, using a decryption key acquired from a management device, comprising:

the management device, which holds the decryption key for decrypting the encrypted content in correspondence with disclosure information relating to disclosure of the encrypted content, refers to the disclosure information and judges, when a request is received from the playback device, whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and transmits the decryption key to the playback device if judged that disclosure is permitted;

the recording medium, which stores the encrypted content encrypted using an encryption key, and a key request program for requesting the management device for the decryption key; and

the playback device, which reads from the recording medium and executes the key request program, receives the decryption key from the management device, reads from the recording medium and decrypts the encrypted content using the decryption key, and plays the decrypted content.

2. (Previously Presented) The contents management system of claim 1, wherein the management device stores, as disclosure information, period information showing at least one of a disclosure start date and a disclosure end date, and judges whether disclosure of the content is permitted according to the period information.

1   3.   (Previously Presented) The contents management system of claim 2,

2   wherein

3   the playback device includes:

4   a key request program executing unit operable to read from the recording medium

5   and execute the key request program;

6   a key receiving unit operable to receive the decryption key from the management

7   device;

8   a content reading unit operable to read the encrypted content from the recording

9   medium; and

10   a playback unit operable to decrypt the encrypted content using the decryption

11   key and playback the decrypted content, and

12   the management device includes:

13   a key storage unit storing the decryption key;

14   a disclosure information storage unit storing the period information as disclosure

15   information;

16   a disclosure judging unit operable to receive the request from the playback device,

17   and to refer to the period information and judge whether disclosure of the encrypted content is

18   permitted; and

19   a key transmitting unit operable, if judged that disclosure is permitted, to transmit

20   the decryption key to the playback device.

1   4.   (Previously Presented) The contents management system of claim 2,

2   further comprising a manager device used by a manager of the system, wherein

3   the manager device receives update information used for updating the period

4   information and transmits the received update information to the management device, and

5   the management device receives the update information from the manager device

6   and updates the period information according to the received update information.

1   5.   (Previously Presented) The contents management system of claim 2, further

2   comprising a manager device used by a manager of the system, wherein

3   the management device, on receipt of a request from the playback device,

4   generates historical information that includes a user identifier which uniquely identifies a user

5   using the playback device, and a content identifier which uniquely identifies the encrypted

6   content, and stores the generated historical information,

7   the manager device receives an historical information request for transmission of

8   historical information stored by the management device, and transmits the received historical

9   information request to the management device, and

10   the management device receives the historical information request from the

11   manager device, reads the stored historical information and transmits the read historical

12   information to the manager device.

1   6.   (Previously Presented) A portable recording medium storing an encrypted

2   content to be played by a playback device using a decryption key acquired from a management

3   device, wherein

4   the management device holds the decryption key of the encrypted content, and

5   the recording medium stores the encrypted content encrypted using an encryption

6 key, and a key request program for requesting the management device for the decryption key.

1   7-13. (Cancelled)

1   14. (Previously Presented) A playback device that plays an encrypted content

2 stored on a portable recording medium, using a decryption key acquired from a management

3 device, wherein

4   the recording medium stores the encrypted content encrypted using an encryption

5 key, and a key request program for requesting the management device for the decryption key,

6   and

7   the playback device reads from the recording medium and executes the key

8 request program, and on receipt of the decryption key from the management device, reads from

9 the recording medium and decrypts the encrypted content, and plays the decrypted content.

1   15. (Previously Presented) A contents management method used by a

2 contents management system that includes (i) a management device which holds a decryption

3 key for decrypting an encrypted content in correspondence with disclosure information showing

4 whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and (ii) a portable recording medium

5 which stores the encrypted content and a key request program for requesting the management

6 device for the decryption key, comprising the steps of:

7   reading from the recording medium and executing the key request program;

8   referring to the disclosure information and judging, when a request is received

9 from a playback device, whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and

10 transferring the decryption key to the playback device if judged that disclosure is permitted; and

11   receiving the decryption key from the management device, reading from the

12   recording medium and decrypting the encrypted content using the decryption key, and playing

13   the decrypted content.

1   16.   (Previously Presented) A contents management program used by a

2   contents management system that includes (i) a management device which holds a decryption

3   key for decrypting an encrypted content in correspondence with disclosure information showing

4   whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and (ii) a portable recording medium

5   which stores the encrypted content and a key request program for requesting the management

6   device for the decryption key, comprising the steps of:

7   reading from the recording medium and executing the key request program;

8   referring to the disclosure information and judging, when a request is received

9   from a playback device, whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and

10   transferring the decryption key to the playback device if judged that disclosure is permitted; and

11   receiving the decryption key from the management device, reading from the

12   recording medium and decrypting the encrypted content using the decryption key, and playing

13   the decrypted content.

1   17.   (Previously Presented) A computer-readable recording medium storing a

2   contents management program used by a contents management system that includes (i) a

3   management device which holds a decryption key for decrypting an encrypted content in

4   correspondence with disclosure information showing whether disclosure of the encrypted content

5   is permitted, and (ii) a portable recording medium which stores the encrypted content and a key

6   request program for requesting the management device for the decryption key, the contents

7   management program including the steps of:

8   reading from the recording medium and executing the key request program;

9   referring to the disclosure information and judging, when a request is received

10   from a playback device, whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and

11   transferring the decryption key to the playback device if judged that disclosure is permitted; and

12   receiving the decryption key from the management device, reading from the

13   recording medium and decrypting the encrypted content using the decryption key, and playing

14   the decrypted content.

1   18.   (New) A playback device that plays an encrypted content stored on a

2   portable recording medium, using a decryption key acquired from a management device, the

3   playback device comprising:

4   a key request program executing unit operable to read from the recording medium

5   and execute the key request program;

6   a key receiving unit operable to receive the decryption key from the management

7   device;

8   a content reading unit operable to read the encrypted content from the recording

9   medium; and

10   a playback unit operable to decrypt the encrypted content using the decryption

11   key and playback the decrypted content,

12   wherein

13   the recording medium stores the encrypted content encrypted using an encryption

14   key, and a key request program for requesting the management device for the decryption key,

15   and

16   the playback device reads from the recording medium and executes the key

17   request program, and on receipt of the decryption key from the management device, reads from

18   the recording medium and decrypts the encrypted content, and plays the decrypted content.

1   19.   (New) The playback device of claim 18 wherein the key request program

2   authenticates a user.

1   20.   (New) The playback device of claim 19 wherein the recording medium

2   having the key request program and the encrypted content is a compact disk.

1   21.   (New) The playback device of claim 19 wherein the recording medium

2   having the key request program and the encrypted content is a DVD.

1   22.   (New) The playback device of claim 19 wherein the management device

2   determines if a key requested by the key request program should be sent to the content reading

3   unit using based on one or more criteria.